



HOUSING PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

JULY 1, 2021



AGENDA

- Summary of Community Engagement
 - Group Interviews
 - Google Forms
 - Community Forum
- Needs Assessment
- Summer Engagement Opportunities



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

WHAT HAVE WE HEARD SO FAR?





MIXED BAG

LOTS OF DISAGREEMENT ...

- Concerns about/opposition to growth, more density
- Hopes for more affordable housing development (more density is OK)
- Openly expressed concerns about racism in Arlington – from housing advocates and housing opponents and just about everyone in between
- Distrust of for-profit developers, Town government, people who simply don't agree ...
- No more market-rate housing ... but, no realistic ideas about how to leverage 100% affordability
- Are the consultants hearing too much from “pro-housing” groups?
- Are the consultants hearing too much from anti-growth, anti-density groups?



SMALL-GROUP INTERVIEWS

3 DAYS / 16 INTERVIEWS / 54 PARTICIPANTS / SAMPLE LIST

- Town Meeting Members
- ZBA
- Redevelopment Board
- Conservation Commission
- HPIC
- Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture
- Select Board
- Diversity Task Group
- Open Space Committee
- Envision Arlington
- Disability Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- Tourism & Economic Development
- Sustainable Arlington
- Arlington Fights Racism
- LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission
- Arlington Heights NAPIC
- Housing Corp. of Arlington
- Greater Somerville Homeless Coalition
- Greater Boston Legal Services
- Arlington EATS
- Interested residents
- And more!



WHEN WE ASKED ... WHY ARLINGTON?

- Proximity to Cambridge, Boston, Somerville
- Access to transit & bike path
- Walkability
- Schools
- Relative affordability compared to neighboring communities
- Most people said they would like to stay in Arlington
- Urban/suburban hybrid

neighboring communities."

"There is a balance of being close to Boston and Cambridge but also far enough to enjoy open space."

"You get more bang for your buck compared to



WHEN WE ASKED ... WHAT HAS CHANGED?



- Arlington has become much less economically diverse
- Decreased sense of community
- Renovations & teardowns common as property values increase
- Increase in number of homeless people

"We're talking about three towns globbed into one."

"Every year you need a larger income to live here or need to be more willing to spend more of your income."

"The Town has become more economically similar. There used to be wider spread of income ranges, but this is slowly disappearing over 30 years."



WHEN WE ASKED ... WHAT ARE ARLINGTON'S HOUSING NEEDS?

- Housing affordable at 80% AMI and deeply affordable housing
- Homeownership for seniors to downsize
- Starter homes
- Condos or apartments for families
- "Missing stuff in the middle"
- Smaller units within existing buildings
- Congregate housing

"There is a bitterness that comes from living in Arlington all these years and being unable to afford to stay."

"Innovative housing options need to be explored."

"More housing could be inserted as infill if zoning would allow smaller units within a structure."

"There is a large unmet need for seniors. It is a constant theme."

GOOGLE FORM #1 – 238 RESPONSES

- **WHY ARLINGTON?**
 - Schools
 - Proximity to Boston & Cambridge
 - Transportation Options
- **DO YOU WANT TO STAY?**
 - Most said yes
 - Some unsure
 - Few emphatic no responses
- **REASONS TO STAY**
 - Good commute to job
 - Walkability
 - Neighborhood
 - Family/kids settled
- **REASONS TO LEAVE**
 - Increasing costs
 - Too dense or concerns about becoming too dense
 - Lack of options for seniors
 - Unable to buy
 - Changing character (not explained)



GOOGLE FORM #1

STRONG ROOTS

"We plan to stay long-term. We like the community, and the schools are good."

"I will stay as long as I am able to live independently. The location is very good for me at this age: easy access to most of the things I want, pleasant open space, easy access to downtown via public transit."

"Love the people and the places! Can be in Mass Ave or in the woods within a 10-minute walk either way."

"We live in a walkable neighborhood with an active downtown."

"I am a life-long resident and couldn't imagine living someplace else."

GOOGLE FORM #1

WHY LEAVE?

"We might reconsider if the community or school quality changes."

"I hope to stay here long-term but will consider leaving if population density growth causes it to become more like a city than a town."

"I do hope to stay but housing is an issue. Most rental units are old [and] landlords increasing rents without any improvements."

"Sometimes I feel like Arlington is a museum of itself, circa 1970 or so."





GOOGLE FORM #1

FRUSTRATION & DISTRUST

"Is this false participation for the residents? Why by-invite only focus group(s) before the June 9 meeting?"

"...If this remains a town with such strong racism embedded in it, and if serious action isn't taken to address flooding concerns, we may leave."

"All this lipservice about wanting Arlington to be 'welcoming and diverse' - If this town can not start to talk about the hard, uncomfortable things then it is doomed."

"I reached out . . . for support, but have had 2 previous people 'assisting' me on my case and dropped the ball. I'm on my third and not much has been achieved. . . ."

GOOGLE FORM #1

COST OF LIVING

"I would love to stay for the rest of my life, but eventually my property taxes will force me out."

"My partner and I make too much money to qualify for affordable housing subsidies. But we don't make enough to afford a condo or home in Arlington."

.. We lose many young families from my church because they can not afford to buy within Arlington or any near enough community."

"I would love to stay long-term. . . eventually I will no longer be able to afford my current rent or rent for other apartments in Arlington."



COMMUNITY FORUM /
JUNE 9, 2021

COMMUNITY INPUT

- Need to connect with tenants of affordable units
- Need to speak with disability advocates

*"Any effort to hear from people who aren't residents of town?
Those are the ones we are excluding."*

*"Creating policy based on the input of largely older, long-term
homeowners seems to be a recipe to tilt toward the status quo,
which has some deep structural inequalities."*

COMMUNITY FORUM RELATIONSHIP WITH DEVELOPERS



Concern about reliance on developers for affordable housing, but developers will be part of solution: "They're the ones who actually build things."



If developer asks for concessions, Town needs to hold them to a higher standard in terms of the rest of their footprint...



COMMUNITY FORUM USE OF FUNDS (CPA, CDBG, AHT)



Disagreement about 100% AMI threshold for AHT*

Mixed views on funding AHA; sense that AHA is "opaque" but AHA needs more resources.

"More transparency and education about how we invest in projects would help people feel more confident."

"Best way to achieve affordable housing is through a concerted effort about seeing what apartments already exist and renovating them."

"Invest in new housing developments near public transportation; creates more walkability, an important focus especially because of climate change. Should use CPA funds and the Housing Trust Funds towards [this] and purchasing existing housing too."

**Ed. note: 100% is the maximum income for community housing under the Community Preservation Act.*

COMMUNITY FORUM

TOPIC:
ZONING AND
ACCOMMODATING
CHANGE IN THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT

"We need to look at our zoning regulations and relax them. And we need a better diversity of people (race, income, etc.) contributing to this conversation."

"Zoning is a big reason we've lost housing diversity, and it was intentional."

"We need alternative housing types – scale, size. We can make it easier to build these things."

"Do not reduce green space."

GOOGLE FORM #2

POST-COMMUNITY FORUM

- 7 respondents; all attended the forum
- Respondents *generally agree* there is need for affordable housing, especially for those most in need, but ...

Consensus lacking:

- Definition of affordable housing
- Use of market solutions to create affordable housing
- Appetite for change, increased density, etc.

Room for education:

- Rent control
- Tear-downs (Who drives this trend - developers or new owners?)
- Developing on Winchester Golf Course
- Financing of affordable housing

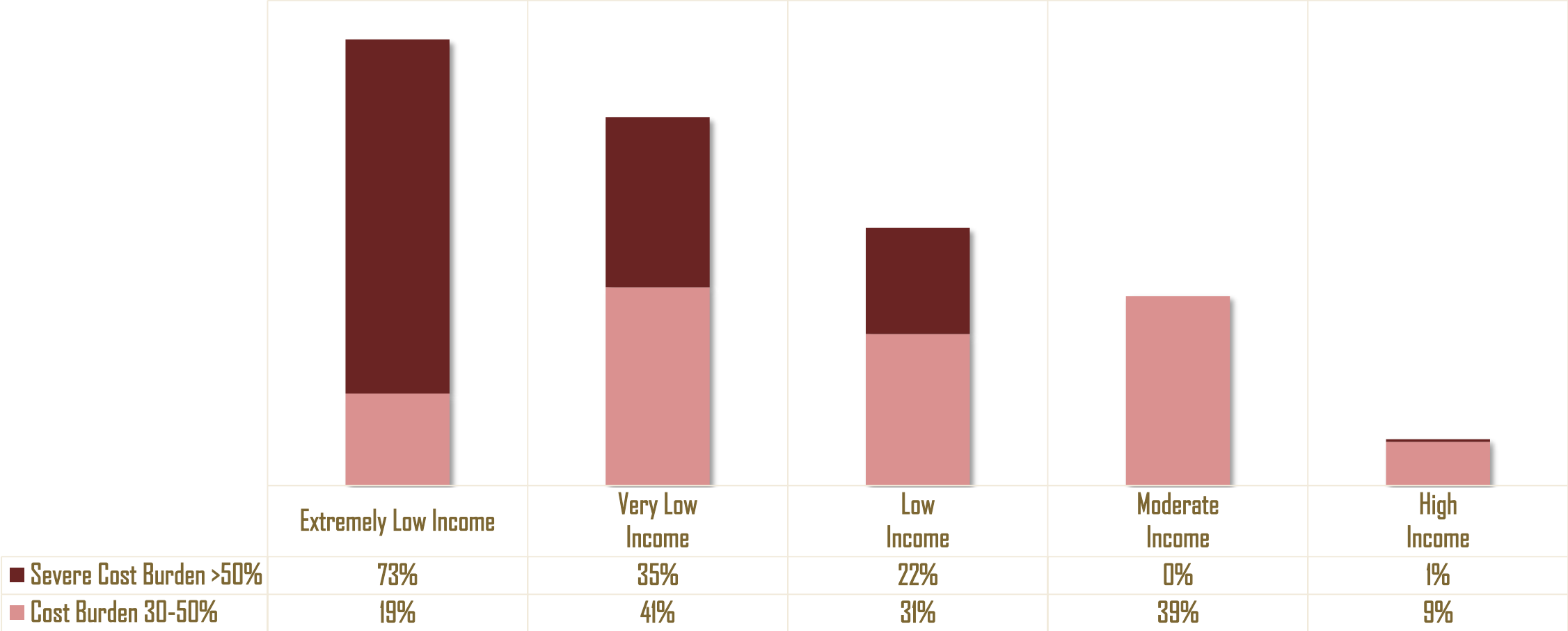


HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

INITIAL
OBSERVATIONS

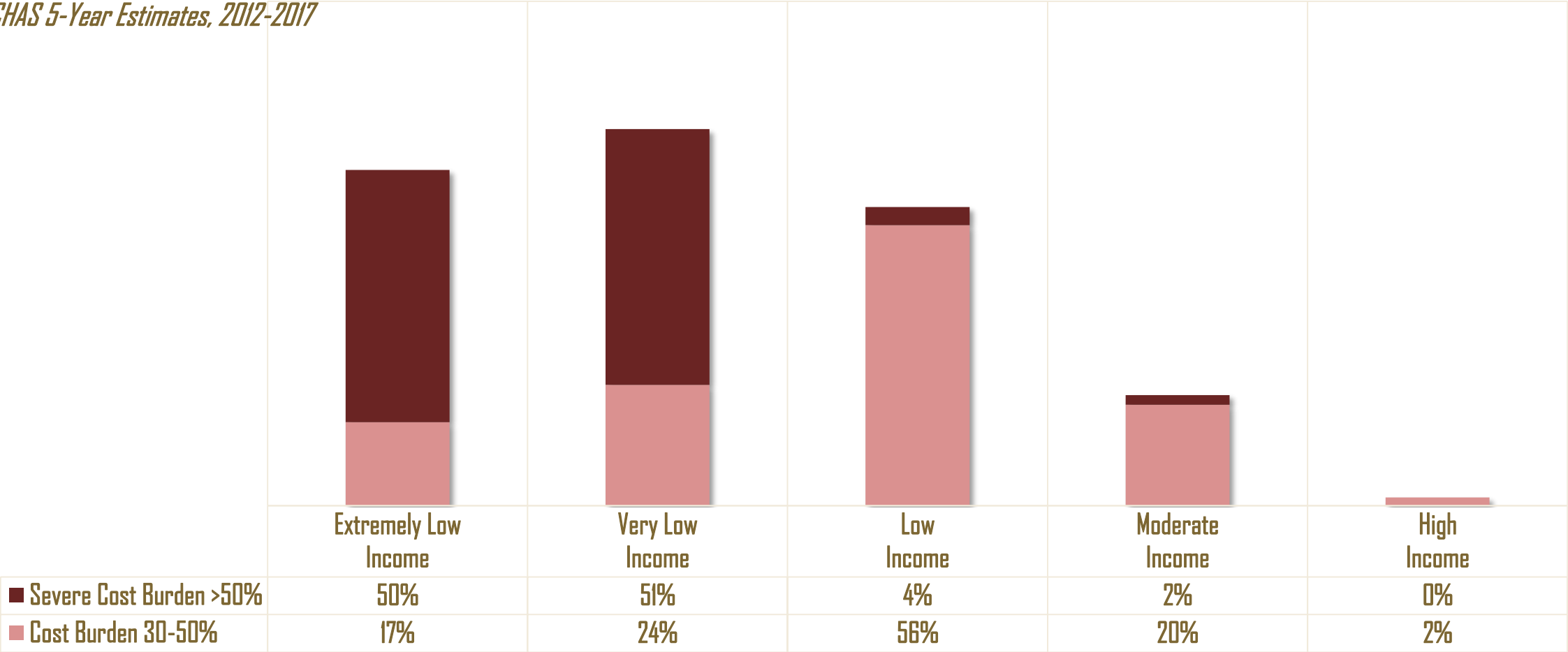
OWNERS: COST-BURDENED AND SEVERELY COST-BURDENED

Source: CHAS 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2017



RENTERS: COST-BURDENED AND SEVERELY COST-BURDENED

Source: CHAS 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2017



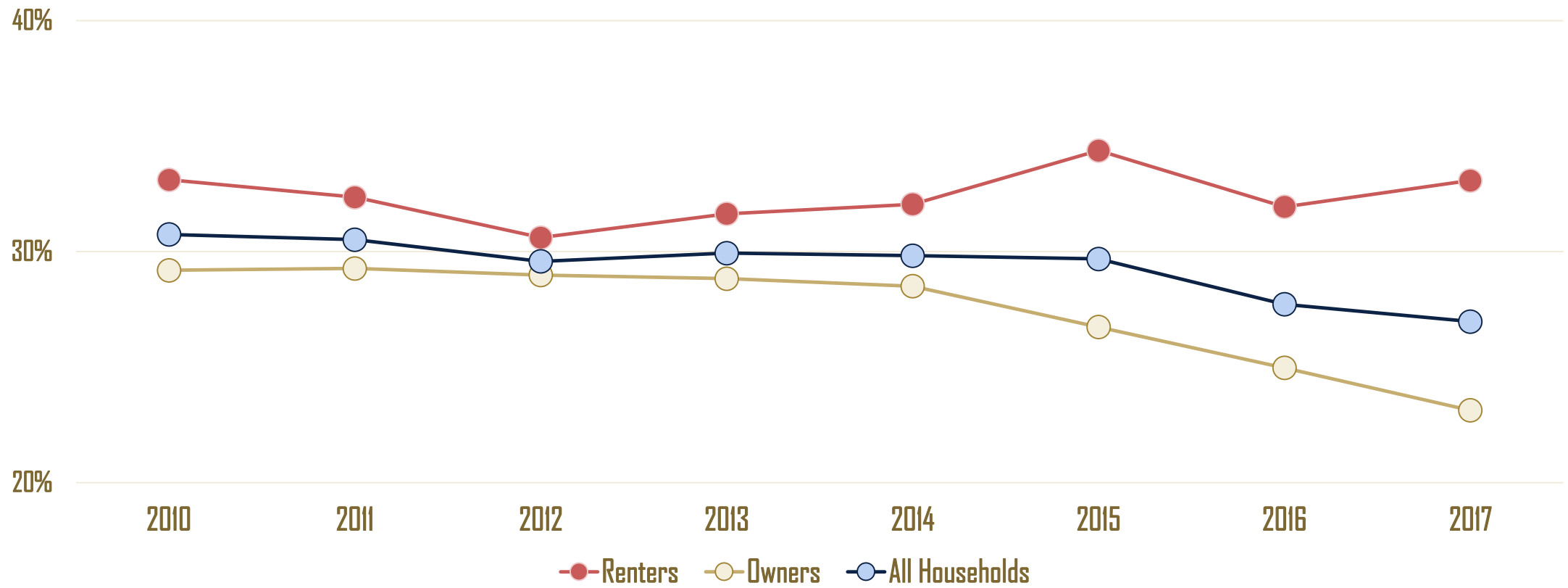
FINANCIAL CHARACTERISTICS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Source: CHAS 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2017

Low-to-Moderate Income Households					Cost-Burdened Households			
Household Type	Total	<30% AMI	30-50% AMI	50-80% AMI	ALL LMI HHLDS	Cost Burden 30-50%	Severe Cost Burden >50%	ALL COST-BURDENED HHLDS
Elderly Family	2,425	13%	10%	12%	34%	17%	9%	25%
Elderly Nonfamily	2,995	31%	21%	12%	★ 64%	24%	26%	★ 50%
Small Related (2-4 Persons)	8,140	2%	4%	5%	12%	11%	6%	17%
Large Related (5+ Persons)	914	3%	4%	2%	9%	15%	4%	19%
Other	4,155	13%	12%	12%	37%	17%	16%	33%
All Households	18,629	11%	9%	9%	Total LMI 29%	15%	12%	Total Cost-Burdened 27%

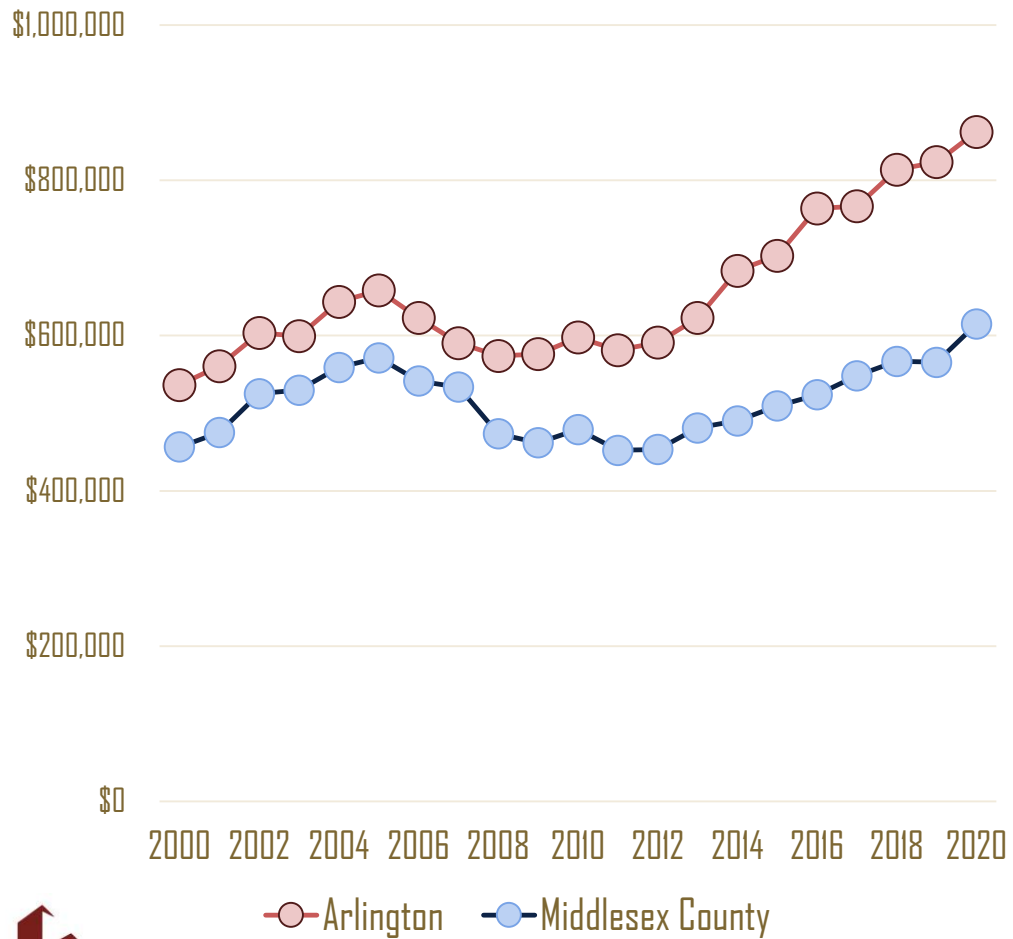
COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

Source: CHAS 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2017



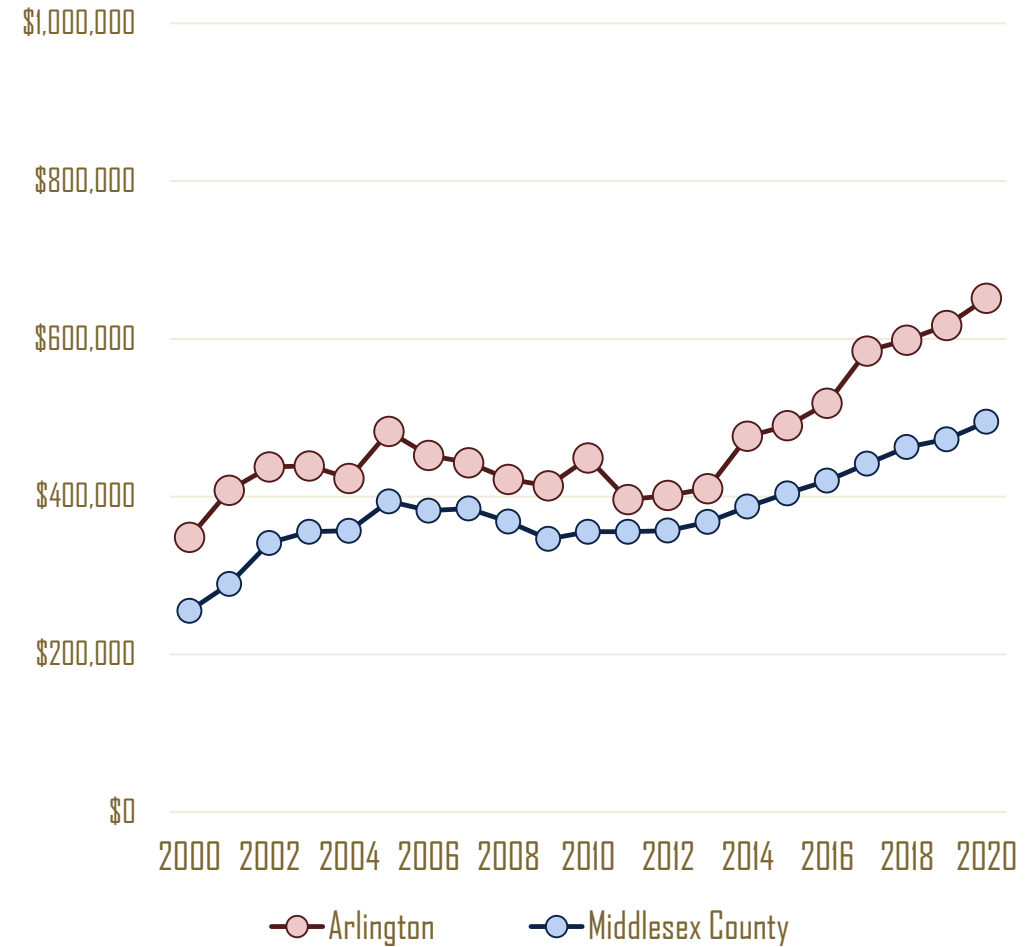
MEDIAN SALE PRICE – SF HOME

Source: Banker & Tradesman

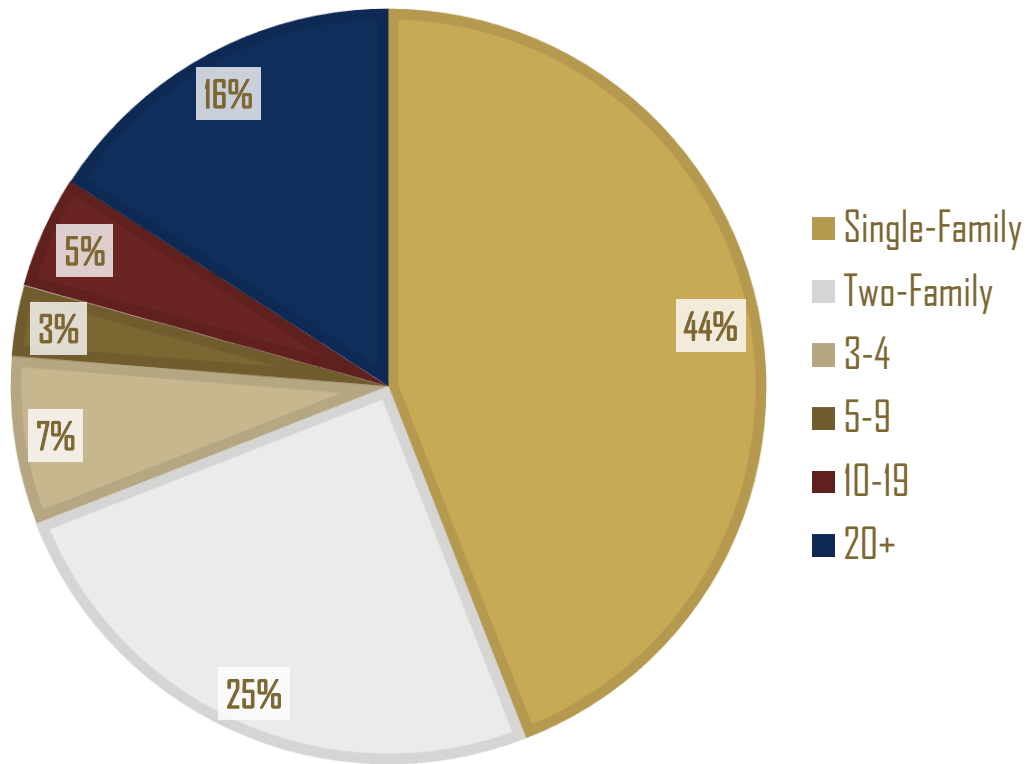


MEDIAN SALE PRICE – CONDO

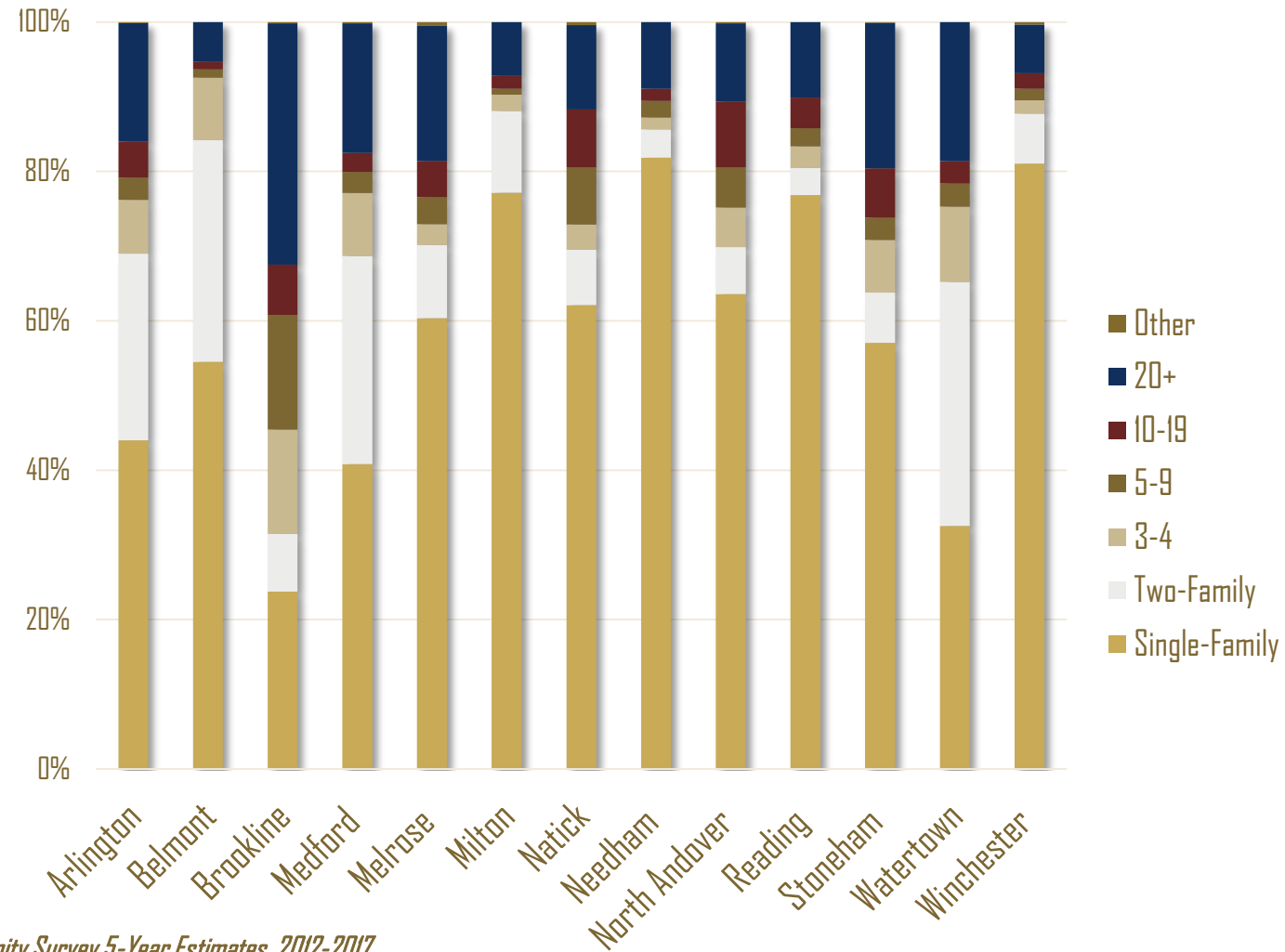
Source: Banker & Tradesman



ARLINGTON HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE



COMPARISON COMMUNITIES HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE

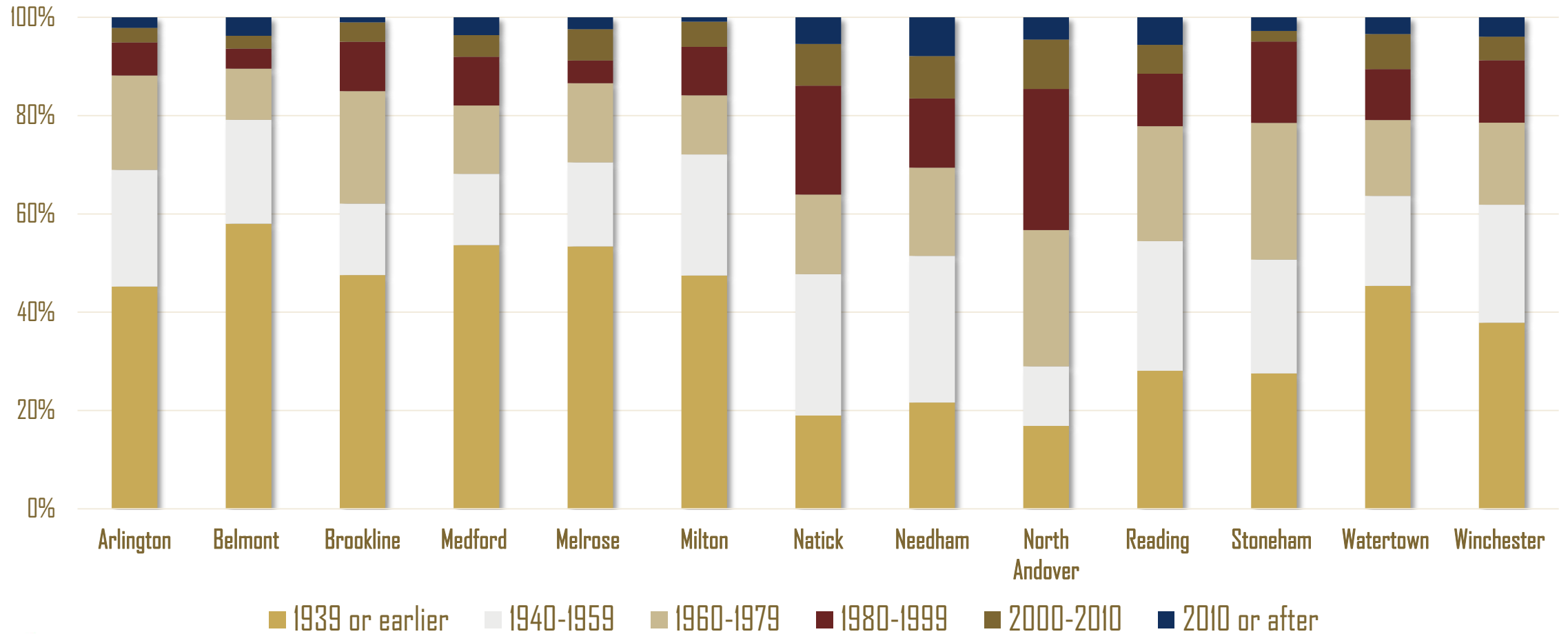


Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2017



PERCENT HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR BUILT

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019

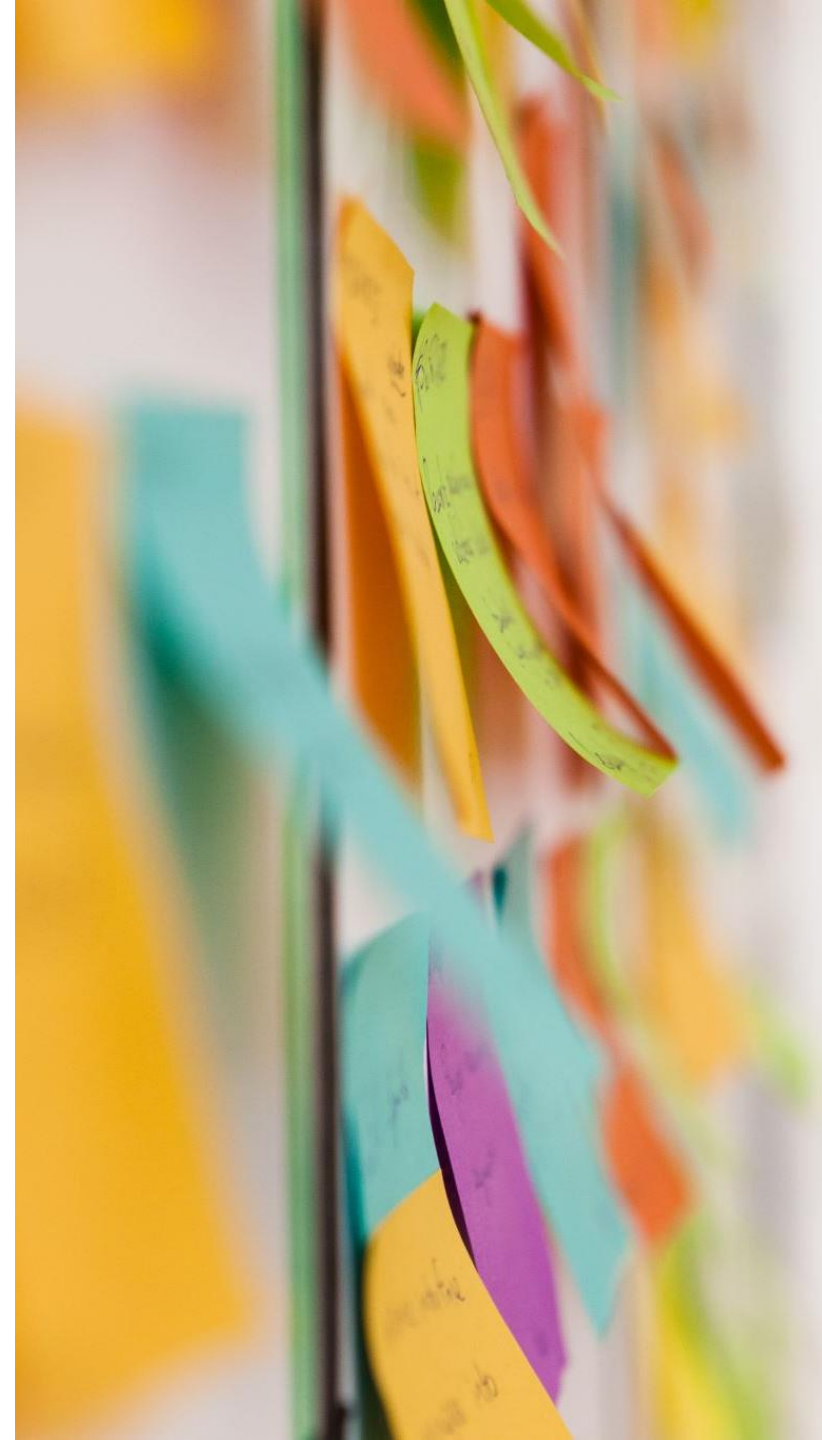


OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HOW CAN THE HOUSING PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION COMMUNITY
HELP?

“MEETING IN A BOX”

- Host a small get-together with people who didn't have a chance to participate in the Community Forum
- Using questions similar to those discussed at the Community Forum, ask your participants to weigh in and offer their opinions and ideas
- Keep a record of attendees, facilitators, and note takers
- Write up a discussion summary (a bullet-point list is fine!)
- Send the sign-in sheets, individual participant forms, raw notes, and your summary to Kelly Lynema





FARMER'S MARKET



FAIR HOUSING COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

JULY 13, 2021 7-8:30
WHO CAN LIVE HERE, WHO DECIDES & WHY?

PROJECT TIMELINE TARGETS

